

CAMPBELL'S LEVEE BRIDGE
spanning South Fork of
Forked Deer River at
Westover Road
Jackson
Madison County
Tennessee

HAER No. TN-30

HAER
TENN
57-JACOB
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
TENN
57-5AC90,
4-

CAMPBELL'S LEVEE BRIDGE

HAER No. TN-30

Location: Westover Road/Old S.R. 1 spanning South Fork of Forked Deer River west of Jackson in central Madison County, Tennessee

U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Jackson South (438SE) Tennessee Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16 and 16

Construction Date: 1920-21

Builder: Designed by Tennessee Department of Highways and Public Works and constructed by Vincennes Bridge Company, Vincennes, Indiana

Present Owner: City of Jackson

Present Use: Vehicular Bridge; Scheduled to be demolished 1992

Significance: The contract for this bridge was Tennessee's first federal-aid project exclusively devoted to a bridge, and as such, the Campbell's Levee Bridge is significant for its association with the development of the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway and the early history of the State Highway Department.

Report Prepared By: Martha Carver
Historic Preservation Specialist Supervisor
Tennessee Department of Transportation
Environmental Planning Office
Suite 900 - James K. Polk Building
505 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37243-0334
(615) 741-3653

DATE: November 1991

Erected in 1920 and 1921, the Campbell's Levee Bridge is located over the South Fork of the Forked Deer River west of Jackson, the county seat of Madison County which is located in West Tennessee. A thorough (or high) steel truss, the bridge connects Jackson with Brownsville to the west; between them is the small town of Westover. It is within the city limits of Jackson in an area which is becoming increasingly industrial. Constructed during the formative years of the Tennessee Department of Highways and Public Works, the primary significance of this bridge is its historical associations with the state highway department and the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway.

The Tennessee State Legislature passed legislation in 1915 to create the State Highway Department, an agency to control highway construction and maintenance as well as to formulate a state highway plan. A major impetus for the creation of this Department was the indication that the Federal government intended to provide Federal-Aid to the states for road construction. This Department was formed so that it could lay the ground work for such money to be appropriated to Tennessee. It was managed by a non-salared six-man commission.

Congress did pass the Federal-Aid Road Act in 1916 which provided for \$75 million to be spent under the direction of the Secretary of Agriculture over five years but only through suitably equipped and organized state highway departments. Tennessee's new Department qualified for this money and began trying to implement a plan lender which to spend its share of the money. The State was required to choose which roads were to be included in the Federal-Aid System and then from this list, decide which projects to fund.

In April 1917, the State Highway Commission met and delineated the Federal-Aid Roads. Among these was the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway. Apparently, the Commission considered the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway and the Dixie Highway the two most important road systems in the State, and in November 1917, the State Highway Commission officially adopted a resolution stating that these two routes would "have preference of construction" over other roads.

The Memphis to Bristol Highway corridor had first been proposed in the early 1800s. In the early 1910s the Memphis to Bristol Highway Association was formed, and in 1912 Governor Ben Hooper encouraged individual counties to issue bonds to finance the road. See page 4 for an early map of the highway corridor. In the same year the Office of Road Inquiry sent an engineer to Nashville to provide survey and planning services to the State, reputedly the first time the federal government provided such assistance to a state. In 1913 the State Legislature authorized counties to issue bonds for its construction, but the county by county approach was not very effective. Substantial work was not done on the highway until the State targeted it as a priority, and even then, it was not finished until about 1930.

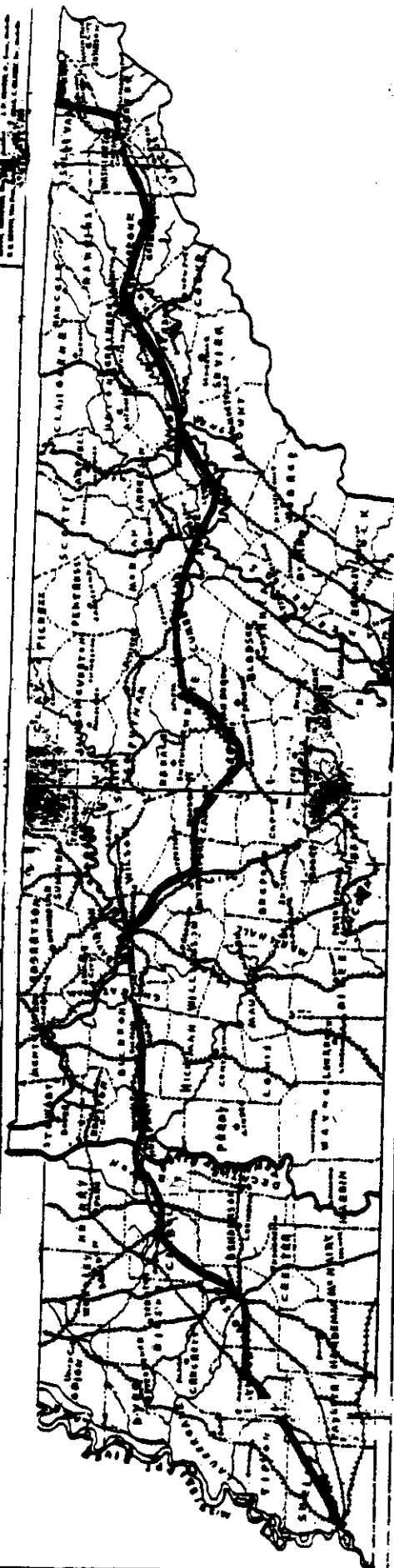
The Tennessee State Highway Commission was reorganized in 1919 under the Public Act 1919 Chapter 149 as the Tennessee Department of Highways. The six-man non-paid Commission was replaced with a three-man salaried Commission which was again given the directive to develop a State Highway Plan. One result was the development in 1919 of a State Highway System which contained 4000 miles of roads designated as State Routes (S.R.). An indication of the perceived importance of the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway was its designation by the State Highway Commission as State Route 1 in its first road plan, a designation it still retains.

Much of the initial work by the State Highway Department and the Federal-Aid programs were curtailed due to World War I. Limited funding was also a major problem. However, the war and the increasing number of automobiles convinced many people that a network of major roads was necessary. Thus, in 1921 a new Federal Highway Act was passed which emphasized a connected system of interstate highways (as opposed to the 1916 directive for local roads). The new program functioned similarly to the previous program but a significantly higher funding levels. This Act also required each state to identify up to seven percent of its roads as "Primary Roads" and stipulated that the Federal-Aid money could be spent only on these roads. The Memphis-to-Bristol Highway was designated a primary road under this plan.

ROUTE OF Memphis-Nashville-Bristol Highway TENNESSEE'S FIRST STATE ROAD

Route Selected
Work Started
Work to be Completed

August 1, 1911
October 1, 1911
November 1, 1913



UNBUILT
ASB METAL CULVERTS
INTERNAL METAL CULVERTS

WILSON, INGRAM & CO.

312 CHURCH STREET
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

1911 Map of the Memphis to Bristol Highway

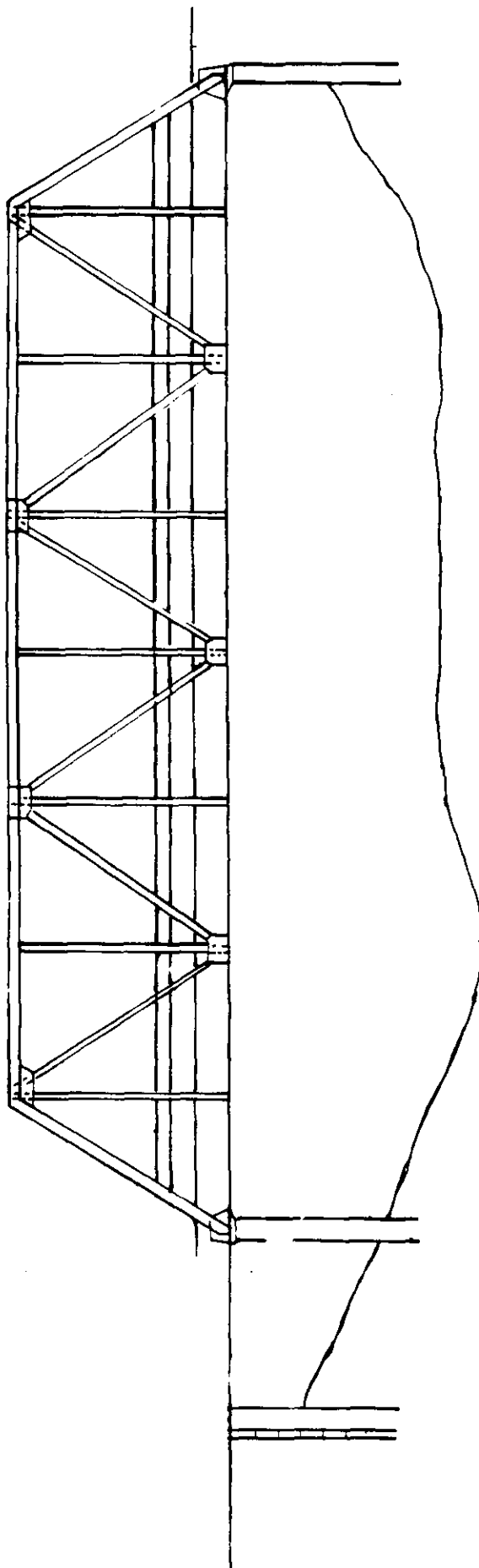
The map above was part of an advertising promotional produced in 1911 by Wilson, Ingram and Company which sold road building equipment. The State Highway Department built this long proposed road between 1915 and 1930 designating it State Route 1. The route shown on this map is basically the one built except in upper East Tennessee. There SR-1 went through Hawkins County to Bristol rather than through Greene and Washington Counties as shown on this map.

Starting in 1918 the State began to let contracts for Federal-Aid projects, and over the following years, many of these contracts were for sections of the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway. The first fourteen Federal-Aid projects were for general highway work, some of which included small bridges and culverts. The fifteenth contract, which was for this bridge, was the first project exclusively for a bridge. The contract was let to the Vincennes Bridge Company for \$37,389.88. In a summary of all Federal-Aid projects, the 1921-22 Biennial Report of the State Highway Commission contains the following report on p. 78:

FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. 15,
in Madison County, is a steel and
concrete bridge at Campbell's Levee.
The contract for the structure was
awarded on January 26, 1920, and the
project completed on September 2, 1921
and placed under state maintenance.

In 1925 the U.S. Highway Board adopted a program to designate official U.S. Highways with a numbering system instead of names. This plan was completed by the fall of 1925 and remains essentially intact today. This routing system placed U.S. numbers on shield shaped signs with even numerals for highways running east-west and odd numbers for north-south routes. The main highways were given numbers under 100 with the more important routes in tens such as 20 or 30 beginning with 10 across the northern part of the country. As a result, the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway from Memphis to east of Knoxville (which included this bridge) was designated U.S. 70. In the late 1920s, the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway was incorporated into the Broadway of America interstate highway from California to New York. Until the construction of Interstate 40, the Memphis-to-Bristol Highway was the primary east-west route in the State. Over the years, many sections have been rebuilt or bypassed. State Route 1 was realigned in the late 1950s, and the Campbell's Levee Bridge with a road segment about five miles long reverted to use as a local road.

The bridge originally contained only one span, a 120-foot riveted Warren through truss. However, about 1975 a 22-foot precast concrete slab was added on the west end of a timber bent abutment and the old concrete abutment was rebuilt as a pier; the original concrete abutment on the east end is intact. Twenty-one feet in height, the two-lane bridge has a curb-to-curb width of 18.4 feet and an out-to-out width of 21.6 feet. The truss is deteriorated and suffers from traffic damage. Composition of the members are atypical reflecting the early transitional design work by the State: top chords and end posts are channels with lacing, bottom chords are angles with battens, verticals are angles paired back-to-back with lacing, and diagonals are small channels with lacing on two sides. Page 7 contains a drawing of the bridge.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carver, Martha.
Tennessee Department of Transportation Historic Highway
Bridge Survey. Unpublished manuscript on file, TN-DOT,
Nashville, nd.
- Good Roads in Sunny Tennessee. Nashville: Volunteer State
Publishing Company, 1929.
- Hokanson, Drake.
The Lincoln Highway. Iowa City: University of Iowa
Press, 1988.
- History of the Tennessee State Highway Department.
Nashville, 1959.
- Johnson, Leland.
Memphis to Bristol: A Half Century of Highway
Construction 1928-1978. Tennessee Road Builders
Association, nd.
- Minutes of the State Highway Commission.
Available at the Tennessee State Archives,
Nashville.
- Rae, John.
The Road and the Car in American Life.
Cambridge: Mit Press, 1971.
- State of Tennessee.
Biennial Report of the Commissioner of the Department
of Highways and Public Works. Nashville, 1921-22.
- Wilson, Ingram, and Company.
"Route of Memphis-Nashville-Bristol Highway." 1911
map, available at Tennessee State Archives, Nashville.